



**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE (CDFA)  
AVOCADO INSPECTION COMMITTEE (AIC)  
September 5, 2018 Meeting Minutes**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Bryce Bannatyne, Grower  
Marc Fallini, Handler  
Dana Thomas, Handler  
Stewart Lockwood, Grower  
John Schaap, Handler

**CDFA REPRESENTATIVES**

Steve Patton  
Stacey Hughes  
Sam Santander

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

None

**INTERESTED PARTIES**

April Aymami, CA Avocado Commission  
Monica Arnett, CA Avocado Commission  
Tom Bellamore, CA Avocado Commission  
Tim Spann, CA Avocado Commission  
David Cruz, CA Avocado Commission  
Keith Blanchard, Index Fresh  
Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia, UC Riverside  
Elaine Bannatyne, Rancho Resplendor  
Wayne Brydon, Del Rey Avocado

**ITEM 1: ROLL CALL/INTRODUCTIONS**

The Committee was called to order at 11:04 a.m. by Steve Patton, Branch Chief of CDFA Inspection and Compliance Branch. Roll was called, a quorum was established, and introductions were made.

**ITEM 2: ELECTIONS**

Steve Patton requested nominations for Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson.

**MOTION:** Dana Thomas moved to nominate Bryce Bannatyne to serve as Chairperson. John Schaap seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

**MOTION:** Dana Thomas moved to nominate John Schaap to serve as Vice-Chairperson. Bryce Bannatyne seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

**ITEM 3: PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

#### **ITEM 4: REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Bryce Bannatyne requested a motion to approve the September 19, 2017 and March 27, 2018 meeting minutes as submitted.

**MOTION:** Dana Thomas moved to approve the September 19, 2017 and March 27, 2018 meeting minutes as submitted. Stewart Lockwood seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

#### **ITEM 5: COMMITTEE VACANCY AND TERMS REPORT**

Stacey Hughes provided the vacancy and terms report. The Committee currently has one Grower member, one Grower Alternate, and one Handler Alternate vacancy. Reappointment of eligible members will take place in May of 2019.

Dana Thomas requested clarification regarding the process by which individuals are nominated to serve on the Committee. Stacey Hughes stated that applicants must complete a Potential Member Appointment Questionnaire (PMAQ) form, which is available from both CDFA and the California Avocado Commission (CAC). She also noted that Committee vacancy notices are published annually by CDFA, with applications for AIC membership being forwarded to the CAC for review.

April Aymami stated that the CAC Board of Directors votes on whether to endorse AIC candidates at their regular meetings, after which time they provide a letter of recommendation for their appointment. Steve Patton noted that individuals interested in appointment to the AIC may submit their PMAQ directly to either CDFA or CAC staff, as the two organizations are in communication throughout the appointment process.

#### **ITEM 6: APPROVAL OF THE AVOCADO INSPECTION PROGRAM BUDGET**

Monica Arnett, Director of Finance for the CAC, presented the 2018/19 Fiscal Year (FY) Avocado Inspection Program (AIP) budget. Monica Arnett reminded those in attendance that many administrative functions of the Avocado Inspection Program, including budgeting and finance, are conducted by CAC staff.

Monica Arnett went on to inform those in attendance that crop estimates for the next avocado season have been updated, with the original crop volume estimate of 250 million pounds revised to 160 million pounds.

Monica Arnett also explained that the \$588,801 ending reserve listed on the Program Budget document will be revised down to approximately \$400,000, due to lower assessment revenue generated by the reduced crop volume. Total projected expenses are \$763,912 for the 2018/19 FY.

A period of discussion ensued pertaining to the current assessment rate and the amount of revenue generated for the Program.

**MOTION:** Dana Thomas moved to increase the assessment rate to the maximum rate of \$0.25 per 100 pounds. John Schaap seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

Monica Arnett noted that an updated budget indicating the revised crop yield estimates will be distributed to members at a later date.

**MOTION:** Stewart Lockwood moved to approve the 2018/19 FY Avocado Inspection Program budget with revised crop forecast and assessment rates. John Schaap seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously, with no abstentions.

### **ITEM 7: PROGRAM UPDATES**

Tim Spann, CAC Research Program Director and Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia discussed a new technological instrument used to test maturity in various fruits. They explained to those in attendance that the handheld device utilizes near-infrared light to measure fruit density, and has the potential to provide users with a means of rapidly analyzing avocado dry matter content. Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia went on to explain that additional research and data collection is required in order to refine the accuracy of the device.

Samuel Santander provided the Avocado Inspection Program update. Samuel Santander explained that from March 2018 through August 2018, 8007 size counts were performed, with 155 Notices of Noncompliance issued, and 8058 containers rejected. He went on to state that 329 maturity tests were performed, resulting in one Notice of Noncompliance and disposal of 100 pounds of avocados. Samuel Santander also stated that maturity tests were performed on imported avocados, with 22 tests performed on avocados originating from Mexico, 26 tests on avocados originating from Peru, and one test on avocados originating from Colombia.

Steve Patton provided those in attendance with an update on the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule (PSR). He explained that the PSR has been in effect since January of 2018. However, enforcement of the PSR has been delayed until Spring of 2019. CDFA has authorized a new Produce Safety Program, which will conduct inspections of California farms on behalf of the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA). CDFA and FDA have been working to conduct On-Farm Readiness Reviews (OFRR) to assist farmers in preparing for PSR standards. These OFRR's will be conducted at various locations throughout the state. He went on to state that PSR enforcement will initially prioritize large farms, and specific commodities selected by FDA for all states to focus inspections for 2019. Steve Patton also stated that CDFA has created a web page dedicated to the Produce Safety Program, containing information on compliance, Grower Training courses, and other resources pertaining to the PSR.

Steve Patton also explained that the United States Department of Agriculture is in the process of implementing a Harmonized Plus Audit, designed to combine and streamline elements from several existing audits. The Harmonized Plus Audit has also been

granted official alignment recognition from the FDA, affirming that the audit includes all requirements of the PSR.

#### **ITEM 8: GEM VARIETY PROVISIONAL RELEASE DATES**

Samuel Santander explained to the Committee that data necessary to finalize the provisional release dates for Gem variety avocados is in the process of being compiled. He went on to explain that data collected thus far indicates that the provisional release dates for the Gem variety will be very similar to those of the Gwen variety avocado. CDFA expects to provide industry with provisional release dates for Gem and other varieties of avocado in October.

Dr. Mary Lu Arpaia provided those in attendance with overview of release date research methodology. She explained that avocado samples must be collected from multiple geographic sites throughout Southern California, and across several months. Statistical data is then compiled and processed in order to determine appropriate release dates.

A period of discussion ensued, pertaining to Gem Variety Release Date Project scope, funding, and research methodology. It was decided by the Committee that a teleconference to further discuss the development of the Gem Variety Release Date Project would be scheduled at a later date, following the release of the next avocado crop estimates.

#### **ITEM 9: NEXT MEETING/AGENDA ITEMS**

The next meeting will be held on March 27, 2019 at 11:00 a.m. in Irvine, at the California Avocado Commission office.

#### **ITEM 10: ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 12.25 p.m. by Bryce Bannatyne, Chairperson.

Respectfully submitted by:

  
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Sam Santander, Program Supervisor  
Avocado Inspection Program  
Inspection and Compliance Branch